

Message Text

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53-L

ACTION EA-14

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R 170510Z JAN 74

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9289

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 666

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: EXGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, CH, TH

SUBJECT: PRC/TRG RELATIONS

REF: BANGKOK 543

SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO HONG KONG TAI CONSUL GENERAL, RECENT PRC CONTRACT TO SUPPLY DIESEL OIL TO THAILAND REPRESENTS SIGNIFICATN DEVELOPMENT IN PRC/RTG RELATIONS. LOCAL PRC/RTG CONTACTS IN HONG KONG HAVE ALSO INCREASED. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING JANUARY 14 CONGENOFF'S COURTESY CALL ON THAI CONSUL GENERAL THALERNGCHAI CHARTPRASERT, LATTER ENGAGED IN BRIEF DISCUSSION OF RTG/PRC RELATIONS. RESPONDING TO CONGENOFF'S OBSERVATION THAT CONTRACT SIGNED JANUARY 13 IN HONG KONG BY WHICH CHINESE WILL DELIVER 50,000 TONS OF REFINED DIESEL OIL TO THAILAND REPRESENTS TINY PART OF THAI NEEDS(REFTEL, THALERNGCHAI SAID AMOUNT WAS INDEED RELATIVELY SMALL BUT ITS SIGNIFICANCE SHOULD NOT BE JUDGED MERELY ON THAT BASIS, THALERNGCHAI CHARACTERIZED THE TRANSACTION AS A "SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT" ON GROUNDS THAT IT WAS FIRST SOLID RESULT OF RTG-PRC CONTACTS THUS FAR. HE SAID THAT WHILE ON THE RTG SIDE THERE WERE "SOME CABINET MEMBERS" (NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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FURTHER IDENTIFIED) WHO FAVOR PRESSING FOR FASTER DEVELOPMENT OF

RELATIONS BETWEEN PEKING AND BANGKOK, THE PAST HISTORY OF RTG/PRC RELATIONS AND RESULTANT THAI PUBLIC ATTITUDES POSED PROBLEMS AND THE PACE COULD NOT AND SHOULD NOT BE RUSHED TOO MUCH. ON THE OTHER HAND, SINCE THE INITIAL RTG-PRC CONTACTS IN 1972 BEGAN THERE HAD BEEN ONLY CULTURAL AND TRADE VISITS AND FRIENDLY MESSAGE EXCHANGES BUT NOTHING SPECIFIC OR CONCRETE. THE CHINESE GESTURE OF PROVIDING OIL WAS VERY WELL TIMED, SKILLFULLY AND PROPERLY EXTENDED AND WOULD YIELD GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS PAYOFF. VIEWED IN THE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF CONDITIONING THE THAI PUBLIC, IT WAS AN IMPROTANT DEVELOPMENT.

2. RE THE USE OF HONG KONG AND UN MISSIONS IN NEW YORK AS VENUES FOR RTG-PRC CONTACTS, THALERNGCHAI SAID HONG KONG CONTACTS HAD INCREASED BUT THE LEVEL OF CONTACT IN HONG KONG WAS CONSIDERABLY LOWER THAN THAT IN NEW YORK, WHERE PRC IS REPRESENTED BY HUANG HUA, A CCP CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER. NEVERTHELESS, THE THAI OBSERVATIONS IN HONG ONG OF HOW WORKING LEVEL CHINESE REPRESENTATIVES OPERATE AND FOLLOW THROUGH ON POLICY HAS BEEN USEFUL. REPORTS ARE SENT BACK TO BANGKOK WHICH COORDINATES BOTH THE HONG KONG AND NEW YORK CHANNELS.

3. THALERNGCHAI, WHO PRIOR TO HIS HONG KONG ARRIVAL LAST SEPTEMBER, SERVED AS RTG CHARGE IN COLOMBO, SAID HE WAS NOT AS CONVERSANT WITH PRC AFFAIRS AS HE WOULD LIKE DUE TO THE HEAVY FLOW VIP RTG VISITORS AND VARIOUS PROTOCOL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES. NEVERTHELESS HE DISPLAYED CONSIDERABLE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT VARIOUS PRC LEADERS AND DEVELOPMENTS. COMMENTING ABOUT IMPRESSIONS GAINED AS MEMBER OF RTG GROUP THAT VISITED PRC LAST MONTH THALERNGCHAI SAID THE CHINESE HAD BEEN VERY CORDIAL AND METICUOUSLY CORRECT IN RECEIVING THE THAIS. WHILE THE CHINESE HAD TAKEN STEPS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS, SUCH AS THE OIL OFFER AND UPGRADING ALL MEDIA REFERENCES TO RTG, THEY THEMSELVES DID NOT SEEM TO WANT TO FORCE THE PACE OF ACHIEVING CLOSER RELATIONS. OSBORN

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